CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1643
30 April 2001

Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 19 APRIL 2001 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A DECLARATION OF THE BULGARIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RELEASED ON 12 APRIL 2001 BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN'S OFFICE

I have the honor to transmit enclosed herewith the Declaration of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, released on April 12, 2001 by the Foreign Ministry Spokesman's Office.

I would be grateful if this Declaration be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and be distributed to all Member States and Observer States of the CD.

(Signed): Petko Draganov
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Bulgaria
to the Conference on Disarmament

GE.01-61448

Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

released on 12 April 2001 by the Foreign Ministry Spokesman's Office.

The Republic of Bulgaria welcomes the joint statement of the foreign ministers of Turkey and Greece made on April 6 in Ankara regarding the intention to concurrently start the procedures to become parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the so-called Ottawa Convention). As one of the first countries to join the Convention, Bulgaria appreciates the decision of the two friendly neighbour states and considers it as a substantial contribution to and integral part of the efforts of the international community to completely eliminate these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.

The agreement between Greece and Turkey constitutes an important step in promoting the Ottawa Convention norms throughout the region and turning Southeastern Europe into an APM-free zone, which is one of Bulgaria's priorities in its regional security policy.

Bulgaria complied fully and earlier than the established deadline with its obligations under the Convention by removing all mine-fields and destroying all APMs stockpiled on its territory. The Bulgarian regional initiatives are in the spirit of the Ottawa Convention. The steps that Bulgaria undertook jointly with its neighbours, the conclusion of the Agreement between Bulgaria and Turkey on non-use of anti-personnel mines and their removal from or destruction in the areas adjacent to their common border, signed in March 1999, as well as Bulgaria's proposal of October 1998 to the Southeastern European states to assume a political commitment not to use anti-personnel mines and not to deploy them in areas, adjacent to their common borders, contribute to transforming SEE into APM-free zone.

We strongly believe that the enhancement of regional cooperation in this area, as well as the transformation of SEE into an APM-free zone brings significantly about strengthening the confidence, security and good-neighbourly relations in our region. We remain committed to continue working with all our neighbours for the achievement of this goal.